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# ENG 1002G-008-016-040: Composition and Literature

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## English 1002 G: A Course Description and Syllabus

Instructor: Keith Spear, MA  
Office: Coleman Hall 3734  
Phone: 581-7011 or 345-6819 (home)  
e mail: kdspear@eiu.edu  
Office Hours: 11:00-12:00 & 1:00-2:00 MWF  
and by appointment

### Required purchases:

a spiral notebook to be used as a journal for this class only  
two exam booklets (available at the Union Bookstore)

### English 1002 G: Applying the Writing Process to Literature

Writing is a teachable skill, like carpentry or painting or playing the guitar. The big difference is that you can have a wonderful life without ever becoming a carpenter or painter or musician, but effective writing is an indispensable skill that will help you along in whatever role you create for yourself. Rumor has it that good writing is the product of inspiration, but this is for the most part a fallacy. Good writing is not really even a product at all; it is a process. And, as Linda Flower says in *Problem Solving Strategies for Writing*, "If a writer's method relies on waiting for inspiration, she may have a long and uninterrupted wait."

The process theory of writing also does away with the old notion that "first you think it up, then you write it down." What happens more often than not is that you write your way toward what you believe: you discover new ideas *as* you write. Writing becomes a thinking process that improves with practice. That is why we will be keeping journals. The journal writing technique is a way of practicing necessary skills in a way that adds up to many pages without demanding eight or ten page papers from you. It also gives you a no-pressure environment in which to warm up your skills.

### Prerequisites:

The prerequisite for this course is the successful completion of English 1001 G or its equivalent. No student may remain enrolled in 1002 without having satisfied the prerequisite. This is because in our work here we will be *applying* the skills studied in 1001G to the specific purpose of writing about three major genres of literature: short fiction, drama, and poetry.

Real life writing situations—situations in which you may be applying for a job, a grant, or perhaps articulating a complaint—*always* have a specific purpose and audience. General writing skills and talents remain as pure potential unless they can be harnessed for a purpose and fitted to the needs of a specific audience. As we write about literature, we are really practicing the survival skill of adapting to the demands of our environment.

## Grades:

Your grade will be determined by your performance on the following tasks:

12.5%	A 3 to 5 page Interpretive Essay on short fiction.
12.5%	Your journal, <u>collected unannounced</u> .
12.5%	A Mid-term Examination.
12.5%	A 3 to 5 page Comparison Essay.
12.5 %	Quizzes and Additional Journal Entries.
12.5%	An Oral Presentation on a chosen poem.
12.5%	Attendance and Participation in class.
12.5%	A Final Examination.

This may be one of the most memorable classes you take at the university, and it will certainly be one of the most important because you will find your college career—regardless of major—teeming with writing-centered and writing-intensive classes. I am available by appointment at your convenience if I can help, and I have included my home phone number. Also, there is an excellent—and free!—service available to you at the Writing Center, Coleman Hall 3110. You will walk out the door with a better paper every single time.

Except in the case of excused and documented absences, if an assignment is late, it will be docked one letter grade for each day it is late. Papers that have still not been submitted two weeks after the due date will be regarded as “missing” and will receive a minus two on a four point scale (see “Grading” below). They may not be made up.

The Research Component of this class—a look into literary voices from the cultures that define our families’ roots—may be used to replace any other score which is deemed unacceptable.

## Grading:

I will use the following values in averaging your grades:

A+ = 4.2	B+ = 3.2	C+ = 2.2	D+ = 1.2	F = 0.0
A = 4.0	B = 3.0	C = 2.0	D = 1.0	Missing = -2.0
A- = 3.8	B- = 2.8	C- = 1.8	D- = 0.8	

After averaging, I will use the following cut-off points to determine final grades:

A = 4.2 to 3.8      B = 3.7 to 2.8      C = 2.7 to 1.8

NC = 1.7 and below

This is an A, B, C, or No-Credit class, so you can't receive a D or F, but if you are assessed NC, you will need to register for the class again. Invest your time and talents in this class now, and you will never regret it.

## Journals:

Requiring you to keep a journal is a blessing in disguise. It is a place for you to help satisfy departmental requirements for the quantity of writing you produce, free from some of the limitations associated with producing a polished rhetorical artifact. Journal entries can record your impressions of the works you read and serve as practice fields for the essays you subsequently generate.

These “reaction entries” to the pieces we read—the journal entries specified in the syllabus—should consist of at least one hundred and fifty words. In addition, there will be entries from some of our group work and other in-class projects; we may even do some coloring! Please bring your journal to class every day. The journals will be collected unannounced, and their evaluation will constitute a significant portion of your grade.

As you react to the readings, concentrate on trying to identify one or more “key questions” about the work; perhaps even offer the beginnings of an answer. Do not bother with recapping the plot.

## Information for Students with Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

## Plagiarism Policy:

I am required to say this about the English Department’s policy concerning plagiarism:

“Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and / or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work’ (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay, and a grade of N/C for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs office.

Pretty strong language for a pretty serious offense; it occurs, and has resulted in some cases in expulsion from the university. We’re learning a survival skill here, and a cheater is only cheating himself.

## Electronic Writing Portfolio:

You are required by the University to submit one essay from either English 1001 or 1002 to the EWP. If you have not already satisfied this requirement, let me help you take care of it this semester.

Syllabus for English 1002 G, Spring Semester, 2007

- Jan. 8 Introduction to the Class: Composition and Literature.  
Audience Expectations: MLA Form, Present Tense, and Journals.  
Discussion of Concepts rather than Description. Key Questions.
- Jan. 10 In *The Story and Its Writer* (Ed. Ann Charters), please read Kate Chopin's  
"The Story of an Hour" (157-58).  
Journal entry on your reading.  
In-class diagnostic essay.
- Jan. 12 In-class discussion of Chopin and diagnostic essays.  
Gauging the reliability of narrators in short fiction.
- Jan. 15 Dr. King's Birthday—no class.
- Jan. 17 Read Atwood's "Happy Endings" (*Charters* 21).  
Journal entry on your reading. Discussion.  
Writing Groups: Collaborative writing and group-generated fiction.
- Jan. 19 In-class readings of original creations.  
Analysis by means of the Elements of Fiction.
- Jan. 22 Read Carver's, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love,"  
(*Charters* 98). Journal entry on your reading. Discussion.
- Jan. 24 Read Carver's, "Cathedral," (available as photocopy).  
Journal entry on your reading. In-class discussion.
- Jan. 26 A Writer's Weapons: The One-Two Punch of Analysis and Synthesis.
- Jan. 29 Read O'Brien's "The Things They Carried," (*Charters* 632).  
Journal entry on your reading. In-class discussion.
- Jan. 31 Read Erdrich's "The Red Convertible," (*Charters* 260).  
Journal entry on your reading. In-class discussion.
- Feb. 2 \* Turn in a 3 – 5 page draft of an Interpretive Essay on selected fiction.  
In-class viewing of *Death of a Salesman*.

- Feb. 5            One on one Conferences in my office. No class.  
Read Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, (*Stages of Drama* 868-905).  
In a journal entry on your reading, please address the following topic—  
"The Shifting Paradigm of Love and Hate between Father and Son."
- Feb. 7            One on one Conferences in my office. No class.  
Continue reading *Death of a Salesman*.  
In a journal entry on your reading, please address the following topic—  
"Defining the American Male."
- Feb. 9            One on one Conferences in my office. No class.  
Complete Miller's *Death of a Salesman*.  
In a journal entry on your reading, please address the following topic—  
"Interpreting Miller's Play As an Indictment of the American Dream."
- Feb. 12    \*    Turn in a 3–5 page revised Interpretive Essay. Quiz over Miller's play.  
Discussion. Video screening.
- Feb. 14            Discussion of journal responses to specific prompts. Continued screening.
- Feb. 16            Lincoln's Birthday—no class.
- Feb. 19            Read Gaitskill's "Tiny, Smiling Daddy," (*Charters* 289).  
Journal entry on your reading. In-class discussion: Rebelliousness.
- Feb. 21            Read Amy Tan's "Two Kinds," (*Charters* 716).  
Journal entry on your reading. In-class discussion.
- Feb. 23            Read Alice Walker's "Everyday Use," (*Charters* 787).  
Journal entry on your reading. In-class discussion.
- Feb. 26            Review for Mid-term Examination.
- Feb. 28    \*    Mid-term Examination. Please bring an exam notebook.
- Mar. 2            Mid-term Examination continued and completed.

- Mar. 5 Read Joyce Carol Oates's "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" (*Charters* 619). Journal entry on your reading. Discussion. Review of Comparison Essay criteria.
- Mar. 7 In-class screening of *Smooth Talk*.
- Mar. 9 In-class screening of *Smooth Talk*.
- Mar. 12-16 SPRING BREAK—no class.
- Mar. 19 Review of Literature studied to date.  
Discovery of Enhanced Thesis; Advanced Stylistic Strategies.
- Mar. 21 In-class workshop to fine tune comparison topics.
- Mar. 23 \* Turn in 3 – 5 page Comparison Essay.  
Detailed discussion of Poetry Assignments.  
Please bring *Poetry: An Introduction* by Michael Meyer.
- Mar. 26 Individual Presentations on Selected Poetry, Mar. 26 – Apr. 23.  
Specific Guidelines on the Research Assignment: The Voice of Diversity.
- Mar. 28 Individual Presentations on Selected Poetry: Animal Poems.
- Mar. 30 Individual Presentations on Selected Poetry: Animal Poems continued.
- Apr. 2 Individual Presentations on Selected Poetry: Animal Poems continued.
- Apr. 4 Individual Presentations on Selected Poetry: Flavored by Feminism.
- Apr. 6 Individual Presentations on Selected Poetry: Feminist Poetry Continued.

- Apr. 9 Individual Presentations on Selected Poetry: Feminist Poetry Continued.
- Apr. 11 Individual Presentations on Selected Poetry: Feminist Poetry Continued.
- Apr. 13 \* Research Assignment Due: Unearthing Family Roots in Verse.
- Apr. 16 Individual Presentations on Selected Poetry: Sports Shorts.
- Apr. 18 Individual Presentations on Selected Poetry: A Taste of Tradition.  
The Poetry of Frost and Dickenson.
- Apr. 20 Individual Presentations on Selected Poetry: A Taste of Tradition.  
The Poetry of Frost and Dickenson continued.
- Apr. 23 Individual Presentations on Selected Poetry: A Taste of Tradition.  
The Poetry of Frost and Dickenson concluded.
- Apr. 25 Facilitation of Electronic Writing Portfolios.  
Review for Final Examination.
- Apr. 27 Last day of class.
- Apr. 30 – May 4 Finals Week—date for our section to be announced.